Severe punishment for rapists

280. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to review provisions of IPC to ensure severe punishment for rapists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a Women's delegation has met the Home Minister in this regard with some suggestions;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government propose to strengthen the women's help line system to restore confidence; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Law Commission of India, in its 172nd report on "Review of Rape Laws" has, *inter alia*, recommended various changes in section 376 of IPC and has proposed to substitute the word 'rape' used in section 375 of IPC by the word 'sexual assault' to cover various types of sexual assault and also to make the offence gender neutral. Enhancement in punishment has also been recommended for offences under sections 376A to 376D and 509 of IPC; and insertion of a new section 376E dealing with unlawful sexual contact. These recommendations are being examined inter-ministerially and Government is yet to take a final decision in the matter. It is not possible to indicate a specific time-frame for completion of the above exercise.

(c) to (f) A delegation from the National Women's Organization met the Home Minister on 9th June, 2004. In a memorandum submitted to the Home Minister they have requested the Home Minister to take a wide range of steps for controlling and preventing crimes against women such as setting up of special courts for speedy trial of those accused of serious crimes against women, restructuring the existing Crimes Against Women Cells, organizing special training programmes for police personnel, monitoring of crime against women, cases from the trial stage to judgment, etc.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued guidelines to the State Governments to give more focused attention to improving the administration of criminal justice system and to take such measure as are necessary for the prevention of crime against women. In an advisory sent to the State Governments on 5th May, 2004, they have been *inter-alia* requested to exhibit help line numbers of the Crime Against Women Cells prominently in hospitals/schools/colleges premises, and in other suitable places. Further, they have been asked to ensure that there is no delay in registration of FIR in all cases of crime against women as well as in all such cases, thorough investigation and filing of the chargesheets against the accused should be done within three months from the date of occurrence without compromising on the quality of investigation.

Violent incidents by Naxalites

†281. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of violent incidents by Naxalites and Maoists has increased in the country during the last year;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(c) the names of the States affected by violent activities of various organizations alongwith the names of such organizations as per the assessment of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) and (b) There were 903 incidents of naxalite violence during the first half of the current year as against 976 incidents during the corresponding period of 2004. The level of naxalite violence was down by 4% in 2004 over 2003 [1533 incidents in 2004 as against 1597 in 2003].

(c) Certain districts in States of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are affected by naxalite violence in varying degrees.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.